

Testimony on Amendments Impacting Police Oversight

I am writing to address several critical concerns regarding the recently proposed amendments to the police oversight framework. These amendments, in their current form, undermine effective community control and oversight, and I urge a reconsideration of these changes for the following reasons:

1. **Undermining Local Jurisdiction:** The amendments significantly weaken local community control over police oversight. This erosion of authority hampers the ability of local jurisdictions to address and correct issues within their own police departments effectively.
2. **Rule-Making Processes:** The revisions to the rule-making processes dilute the power of the oversight board. These changes make it increasingly difficult to implement meaningful and necessary reforms, thus impeding progress toward greater accountability and transparency.
3. **Forced Ridealongs:** The requirement for forced ridealongs perpetuates bias and poses a risk of trauma for community members who have previously experienced police violence. This measure fails to consider the emotional and psychological impact on individuals who may already be deeply affected by such experiences.
4. **Embedded Police Influence:** The amendments reinforce systemic bias by embedding police influence in the nomination and hiring processes for oversight roles. This integration of police influence compromises the impartiality and effectiveness of oversight efforts.
5. **Community Appeals:** The removal of community members' ability to appeal decisions, while officers retain multiple avenues for appeal, creates a significant imbalance. This imbalance undermines the authority and effectiveness of the oversight board, diminishing its role in holding officers accountable.
6. **Lack of Continual Improvement Requirements:** The absence of continual improvement measures, such as systemic findings and self-audits, risks perpetuating existing flaws within the system. Without mechanisms for ongoing evaluation and reform, the necessary progress towards an equitable and effective oversight system is hindered.

In conclusion, these amendments present substantial challenges to effective police oversight and community empowerment. I urge policymakers to address these issues and ensure that the oversight framework supports genuine accountability and reform.

Thank you for your consideration.

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